

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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*Published by the Commission on Public Relations
of the National Christian Council of Japan*

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TABLE CODE : JAPACONCIL, ADDRESS : CHRISTIAN CENTER, 2,4-CHOME GINZA, TOKYO, JAPAN

Subscription Rates : Japan ¥700; Foreign (Sea mail) \$2.00; (Air mail) \$3.50.

No. 119

February 15, 1958

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EDITOR RETURNS FROM GHANA

The Reverend Kaname Tsukahara, ACTIVITY NEWS editor and General Affairs Department Secretary of the National Christian Council, returned early this month from a round-the-world trip. Mr. Tsukahara took part in the International Missionary Council's assembly in Ghana, West Africa, and also visited Geneva, London, and a number of places in the United States.

At the Ghana meeting, Mr. Tsukahara appreciated the keynote address by Dr. John A. Mackay, in which Dr. Mackay spoke of the significance of holding the assembly in the newly-independent state of Ghana on the African continent. For many Africans, Ghana is a symbol of new hope for the future. Although there is darkness and instability everywhere, we can believe that we are seeing the beginning of a new day. But in considering the Mission of the Church for such a time, we must surrender ourselves to the God revealed in Scripture, otherwise we have nothing to offer mankind as a basis of hope, Dr. Mackay said.

The Japanese delegate was particularly impressed by the concluding message of the conference. The statement emphasized that Christian mission is not the work of men but of God. Mission consists in our obedience to God as revealed in Christ. We are not to serve institutions, boards, or churches, but God alone. In reflecting upon what he had seen and heard, Mr. Tsukahara said, "From this standpoint we must pray and work for both mission and unity in Japan."

Mr. Tsukahara pointed out that the proposed merger of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches--a major issue facing the recent assembly--has long been favored by Japanese churchmen. In Ghana, he learned for the first time why some, in other parts of the world, are opposed to this plan. The Japanese leader feels, nevertheless, that the merger should take place, and that the Mission of the Church would not be diminished, but would rather be strengthened by such a move.

Many young people in Accra, capital city of Ghana, questioned Mr. Tsukahara about his homeland. As members of a new nation, they were impressed by the fact that Japan had become a modern, industrial power only a hundred years after emerging from feudalistic seclusion. The Japanese delegate told them that his own country had erred in taking over the technological fruits of western society, without appreciating the Christian spiritual foundations of the democratic West.

In Geneva, Switzerland, Mr. Tsukahara met many of the staff members at World Council of Churches headquarters. He talked with Professor H. H. Wolf, director of the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies at Cerny, who extended a cordial invitation to any Japanese students who may be interested in work at the Ecumenical Institute.

Mr. Tsukahara visited a number of cities in the United States, talking especially with pastors of Japanese congregations. He spent a few days in Hawaii before returning to Tokyo.

STUDENT LEADERS VISIT INDIA

Mr. Yasutaro Owako of the Japan Y. M. C. A. and the Reverend Rendell Davis, Presbyterian fraternal worker, returned recently from a series of meetings with student leaders in India.

From December 12-17 they took part in a World Student Christian Federation consultation at Tambaram, Madras. Such prominent Asian and western churchmen as D. T. Niles, Lesslie Newbigin, M. M. Thomas, Richard Shaull and others met at Tambaram to plan the Asian program for an extended study project on the life and mission of the Church. This project will have as its focal point a student conference scheduled to be held next winter in Rangoon, Burma.

Mr. Owako and Mr. Davis stayed on at Tambaram to sit in on a meeting of student advisers from India, Pakistan, and Ceylon. From December 24 until January 1 they attended a triennial student conference at Guntur, Andhra State, India.

CHURCHMEN & SCHOOL LEADERS MEET

Several national leaders of the United Church of Christ met with leading representatives of thirty-eight Christian schools and colleges in Atami on February 11 and 12. Discussion centered around the building of a closer, more vital relationship between the Church and the schools. (See also "Discussion on Patterns of Cooperation", ACTIVITY NEWS Number 117, January 15, 1958, and "Christian Schools and the United Church", Number 115, December 1, 1957.)

Highlights of discussion included the following:

1. How to strengthen the Christian witness of faculty, trustees, and students, in order to offset the tendency toward secular penetration within the schools.

2. Subsidies from abroad should go not only toward maintenance of the schools, but also toward a vigorous evangelistic program in the schools.

3. Missionary faculty members from abroad are urgently needed, not only as instructors in English and Bible, but also those qualified to teach in such fields as natural science and mathematics.

4. There should be more contact between the respective synods of the United Church, and the schools located within the borders of each synod.

5. From the viewpoint of education and evangelism, more Christian schools are needed, especially in Hokkaido, and in the northwestern part of Honshu (the main island.)

6. Existing schools should offer more courses in science and engineering.

7. Union Theological Seminary, Tokyo, desires more subsidy from the West in order to increase the salary level of its faculty. The present salary level is only 40% of that of the average of university salaries in Japan. The hope is to increase this to at least 80% of average.

YOUTH LEADERS CONFER

The ninth annual conference of Christian youth leaders is meeting at Lacy Cottage, Zushi, on February 18-20, under the sponsorship of the Youth Commission of the National Christian Council.

This year's theme has been announced as "Christian Education for Youth". The conferees will consider how youth may contribute to the success of the World Convention on Christian Education to be held here next summer.

The group at Zushi will lay plans for the observance of "Youth Week" during the last part of May, and for a number of summer service projects such as work camps, caravans, and youth-in-industry projects.

The Chairman of the National Christian Council's Youth Commission, the Reverend Atsumi Tasaka, will speak on the theme of youth education in the World Convention. The Reverend Kyoji Buma, recently returned from a term of service in New York as Youth Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, will discuss church youth activities in America. Miss Eppie R. Castro, field secretary in Manila for the World Council of Christian Education, will talk on Asian church youth activities.

It is expected that about forty youth leaders from across the country will attend the Zushi meeting.

TAURA COMMUNITY CENTER

The Community Center at Taura, near Yokosuka, provides an example of one type of social service program in which the Interboard Committee for Christian Work in Japan participates. The Center receives continuing support from the Methodist Church, U. S. A. Personnel of the United States Navy Base at Yokosuka have helped the program in various ways. Mr. Shiro Abe is director of the Center, and the Reverend and Mrs. William G. Weiss, Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., are currently assigned to Taura as cooperating missionaries. The Center is housed in what used to be a recreation building for the Imperial Japanese Navy.

The Taura Center offers a number of services to the surrounding community. One of these is sewing school, in which about fifty day and night students participate. Classes in English conversation are a popular attraction. There is a family counseling service, a well baby clinic, and a day care program with a staff of seven serving some one hundred forty children. There is a club program for various age groups. The Center operates a dormitory nearby, where twenty mothers and forty children are housed.

A strong church congregation is currently meeting in the Center, but hopes soon to have a building of its own.

The leaders at Taura recently started a day care service for crippled children. They hope to expand this activity in the future, so as to provide rehabilitation and medical care for a large number of handicapped youngsters. To provide space for this program, they are planning to remodel a large room that was formerly used for Japanese-style bathing.

Future planning includes a reading room and lending library of books and audio-visual aids for Christian pastors in the Taura area. Within the next year or two the Center hopes to add a program of aid to the feeble minded, a medical clinic, and additional services to orphans.

